Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Director of Central Intelligence

Secret

25X1

Soviet Policy in the Middle East and South Asia Under Andropov

MASTER FILE COPY
DO NOT REMOVE
FROM FILE

Special National Intelligence Estimate

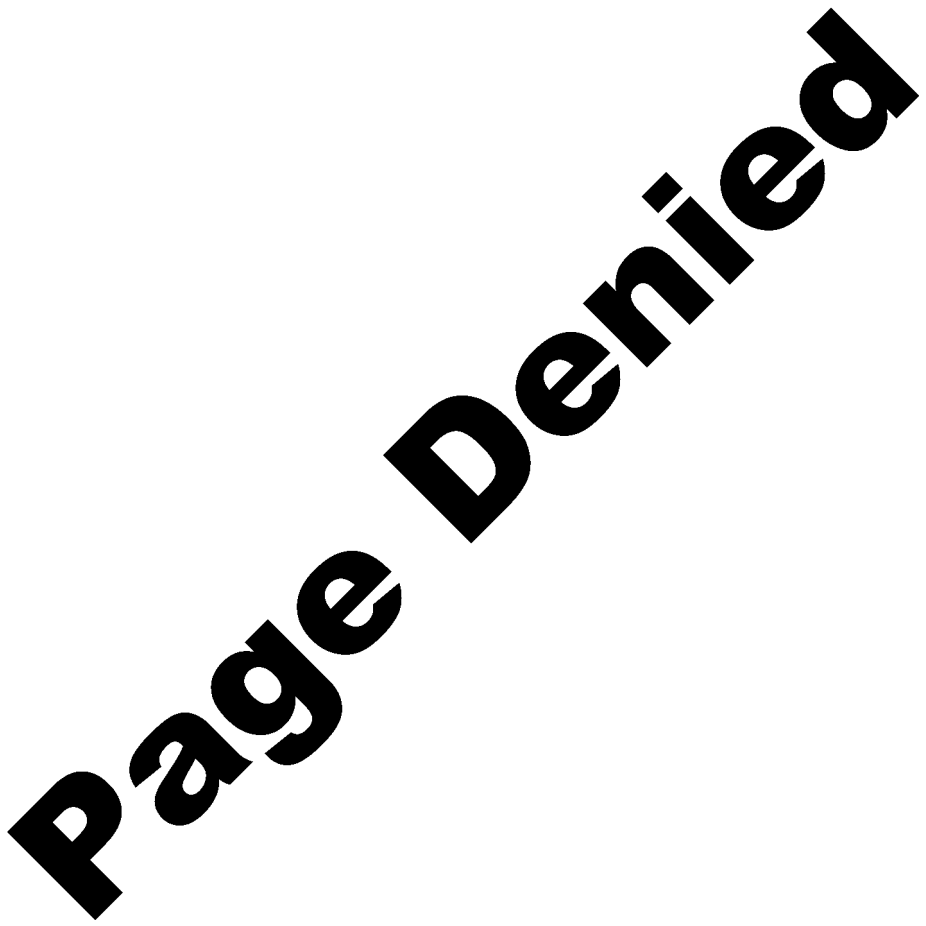
Secret

SNIE 11/30-83
8 February 1983

Copy 437

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1
Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9



Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

SNIE 11/30-83

SOVIET POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA UNDER ANDROPOV

Information available as of 8 February 1983 was used in the preparation of this Estimate.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

SCOPE NOTE

The recent deployment of the SA-5 and additional air defense equipment to Syria is consistent with traditional Soviet strategy in the Middle East and South Asia. It may represent the only way for Moscow to strengthen its position in the region and challenge US Middle East policy. At the same time, it may signal a qualitative change in Soviet strategy and be a precursor to a bolder more adventurous policy in the region.

This Special National Intelligence Estimate examines Moscow's recent behavior in the Middle East and attempts to determine whether it constitutes a new Soviet assertiveness in the region. Likely short-range reactions to activities in Syria are examined, as are longer term Soviet strategies.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

KEY JUDGMENTS

Moscow's recent improvements to air defenses in Syria, including the introduction of the SA-5, has reversed its declining position in Syria and is likely to enhance its credibility in the region. If the Israelis either do not attack the sites or do so at considerable cost, the Soviets will be credited with having restored the integrity of Syria's air defense system and will try to transfer their success to the political arena.

During the next few months, the Soviets will continue to build up air defenses in Syria; their military presence has already doubled to around 5,000 men and probably includes elements of air defense units to man the SA-5 sites. They may introduce other missile systems, including the SA-10,[1] which would enhance defenses against low-flying, high-speed aircraft and would further complicate Israeli military planning. We believe the Soviets will not deploy to Lebanon any of the surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) recently delivered to Syria. Moscow could also use its own pilots to man fighter squadrons in Syria—as it did in Egypt in the early 1970s.

We believe that the Soviets will be responsible for the command and control of the SA-5s and critical elements associated with them. According to one view, the Soviets insisted on taking operational control not only of the SA-5s but of the entire Syrian air defense system and would not have begun deployment without Syrian acquiescence. This would not preclude ostensible Syrian political control of the air defense network or Syrian manning of certain elements of the air defense system, such as SAM sites defending the Golan Heights.[2] All other agencies believe that the Soviets would not have insisted on control of the entire air defense network and that the Syrians would have refused to grant it in any event. The Syrians will have de facto as well as de jure control over the central air defense network command as well as those parts of the system they man. All agencies believe that, without complete Soviet control, the system will be more vulnerable to Israeli countermeasures.

---

[1] *The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes it is unlikely the SA-10 will be introduced in the near future.*

[2] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army.*

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

Israeli leaders are divided over the necessity or wisdom of a preemptive strike against the SA-5 sites. Some Israelis may favor quick action, but most Israeli leaders probably are reluctant to get into a military confrontation with the Soviets and the Syrians. Whether or not the Israelis strike preemptively, a perception on their part of a significantly heightened threat or recurrent crises could lead to an Israeli attack in the next year.

Any Israeli strike that destroyed the sites with few Israeli losses—whether preemptive or resulting from previous clashes—would be another acute embarrassment for the Soviets. But it would also undermine the Lebanese and Arab-Israeli negotiations, at least temporarily, and could also damage US-Arab relations. To preserve their credibility, the Soviets would have to rebuild the complexes and reinforce their defenses still further. While the Soviets would want to respond vigorously, they have little incentive and few practical options for taking the war into Israel proper. Over time, the Israelis would have to weigh the costs of getting into a war of attrition with the Soviets or taking the war into Syria. Faced with these options, Israel may accommodate itself to a more pervasive Soviet military presence in Syria and to greater Soviet political influence in the region.

In the short term, the Soviet deployments and commitments have bolstered the Assad regime's confidence in its ability to withstand an Israeli assault on Syria and probably have increased Israel's determination to extract a higher price from the United States for a withdrawal from Lebanon. A strengthened Syria would be in a better political position to negotiate withdrawal from Lebanon.

This effort by the USSR to bolster its political stature through an increased military commitment to Syria complements the principal lines of current Soviet policies in the region, which are designed to appeal to the majority of Arabs. In the next six to nine months, we expect the Soviets:

— Will continue efforts to underscore the similarity of the Soviet and Fez peace proposals and to obstruct the US initiative. To do so, they will try to persuade both Jordan's King Hussein and PLO chief Arafat not to cooperate in US-backed negotiations, and they will pursue closer relations with moderate Arab states, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

— Will maintain improved relations with Iraq, begun last spring. This policy reflects Moscow's assessment that better relations

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

with Iran are unlikely in the near term, a desire to prevent the further spread of Iranian-style fundamentalism into Iraq, and a need for hard currency from arms sales.

— Will attempt to bolster factions in the Khomeini government that are less hostile to the USSR, while urging Syria, Libya, and South Yemen to broker improved Soviet-Iranian relations.

— Will continue to convey the impression of flexibility with respect to a political settlement in Afghanistan. They simultaneously will seek to consolidate their position in Afghanistan and may increase their troop strength and their use of terror against the Afghan populace.

There is little indication to date that Moscow's current policies are finding greater receptivity in Arab capitals. Nonetheless, the Soviets certainly hope that their military presence in Syria, combined with their ongoing political activities, will enhance their influence in the region. How successful the Soviets will be depends on many factors, including Soviet steadfastness and acuity and US policies. The Soviets have few if any natural allies in the region, and they are starting from what has been a low point of influence. If Moscow can build on its new military presence in Syria, over time it may become a factor that cannot be ignored, as it has been in recent years, by Israel and the majority of states in the region.

Although the SA-5 decision was made before Brezhnev's death, Andropov has implemented it. This strongly reaffirms the Soviet commitment both to Syria and to pursuit of a major role in the region. There is no indication that this initiative is a precursor of other, more aggressive, military policies elsewhere in the region. But the deployment is evidence that the Soviets will take bold action to protect and advance their position—as they have for the past 15 years.

Should the Andropov leadership decide to alter course and adopt a more aggressive military policy in the region, we would expect to see some clear indicators:

— An effort to put pressure on Iran or Pakistan would be demonstrated by a significant strengthening of Soviet military forces in Afghanistan and the southern border regions of the USSR.

— A policy decision to try to crush the insurgents in Afghanistan would be reflected in the introduction of a massive military

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

force into that country (several hundred thousand Soviet troops at least).

— A generally higher military profile in the region might be indicated by intensified Soviet efforts to deploy more advanced military aircraft to the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean regions.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

DISCUSSION

1. Soviet influence in the Middle East has been on the decline for the past decade. The USSR's principal problems have been its inability to deal with both sides in the Arab-Israeli dispute and its reluctance to commit itself militarily to the defense of its clients. The humiliation of Syria in Lebanon highlighted Moscow's inability to influence Arab-Israeli developments and damaged Soviet political and military credibility throughout the area. Elsewhere in the region, the Soviets—like others—have been consistently rebuffed by the Khomeini regime in Iran and unable to influence the course of the Iran-Iraq war. Their forces in Afghanistan seem no closer to defeating the insurgents than they were three years ago.

Recent Soviet Actions and Motives

2. Since the debacle in Lebanon last summer, the Soviets have undertaken various initiatives designed to increase their influence in the region:

- They have placed SA-5 and other advanced air defense systems in Syria; these are manned by Soviet personnel, thereby increasing both the Soviet commitment to Syria and the risk of an Israeli attack against Soviet-manned installations.
- They have repackaged their previous proposals for an international conference on the Arab-Israeli issue in which they would play a major role.
- They have become more supportive of Iraq, both politically and militarily, in its struggle with Iran.
- They have tried to create an impression of flexibility in seeking a political settlement of the Afghan situation.
- In October 1982, Soviet naval vessels and reconnaissance aircraft conducted their first combined exercise with Libyan forces.

3. To date, Andropov's objectives and policies in the Middle East and South Asia appear to be consistent with those established under Brezhnev. The decision to deploy SA-5s to Syria was made last summer before Brezhnev's death. By actively pursuing such actions, however, Andropov has reaffirmed Moscow's commitment to advancing the Soviet position in the region and gaining leverage and status equal to that of the United States.

4. The Soviets recognize that their policies in the Middle East could have an impact on other aspects of their foreign policy. Any Soviet concern that the deployment of SA-5s and other systems to Syria would be considered provocative by the United States and Western Europe is offset by the Soviet claim that the SA-5s are defensive systems and not to be used unless Israel attacks Syria. The Soviets may believe that Western sympathy for Israel has eroded in the wake of Lebanon and would be even weaker if Israel should attack Syria. Moscow may believe, in addition, that failure to buttress its Syrian ally would weaken its global position.

Syria

5. A Soviet evaluation of the humiliating defeat of Syria and the PLO in Lebanon noted the importance of Israeli AWACS, reconnaissance, jamming, and electronic countermeasures aircraft and emphasized the need to improve Syria's air defenses and to extend its air defense zone forward. Militarily, the systems are designed to create a better integrated air defense system. While they have not created an impenetrable Syrian air defense shield, they will exact losses in the event of Israeli airstrikes. Most important, their deployment complicates Israeli planning, particularly because these missiles can attack aircraft over Israel, Lebanon, and the Mediterranean.

6. The Soviet commitment to Syria is designed to restore the USSR's credibility as a major actor in Middle East affairs and to build Arab and Third World confidence in Soviet weaponry. The Soviets also want to hinder the US-sponsored Lebanese and Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and to regain a role in Middle East peace talks—a major goal since their exclusion from the political process began after the

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

1973 war. They may hope that their increased military presence in Syria will provide them with greater leverage with Syria and other Arab countries. They also may see this presence as a response to the US military presence in Lebanon and the Sinai, which Moscow views as "bridgeheads" for intervention in the region. For all these reasons, Soviet leaders have apparently concluded that these objectives required an increased military commitment to Syria, their most important Arab client.

Arab-Israeli Negotiations

7. The most recent Soviet initiative on Middle East peace negotiations was made by Brezhnev in mid-September, following President Reagan's proposal and the Arab League peace plan. The Soviets have tried to emphasize the convergence between the Arab and Soviet initiatives and to undermine the Reagan proposal. Their criticism has emphasized the US plan's failure to provide for an independent Palestinian state.

8. In recent months, the Soviets have tried to persuade Jordan's King Hussein and PLO chief Arafat not to pursue the US plan's call for Jordan to represent the Palestinians at the peace talks. Privately, they have urged Arafat to coordinate his policies with Syria, which opposes any Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

Iraq and Iran

9. Moscow has been opposed to the Iran-Iraq war since its inception, and its responses to both countries have been determined largely by the situation on the ground. Soviet-Iraqi relations have improved since the spring of 1982. Soviet weapons deliveries have continued at a steady pace, and there is good evidence that the two countries signed an arms deal worth an estimated $2 billion in April—and possibly another arms agreement in December. Most significant, since Iranian forces crossed into Iraq in July, the Soviets—both in private and in public—have been more supportive of Iraqi proposals for ending the war.

10. The improvement in relations has stemmed in part from an apparent Soviet conclusion last spring that prospects for better ties with Iran were slim as long as Ayatollah Khomeini remained in power. Iran's success at Khorramshahr in June and its preparations for a drive into Iraq also strengthened Soviet concern about the possible spread of Iranian-style Islamic fundamentalism into Iraq.

Afghanistan

11. Since Andropov's accession to power, Soviet spokesmen have suggested that he is serious and flexible in seeking a political solution in Afghanistan. This approach is designed to recapture the propaganda initiative, to dissuade Pakistan's President Zia from moving closer to the United States, and to encourage Zia to deal directly with Kabul. Little has emerged to lend substance to the early reports of flexibility. When it became apparent that reports of possible Soviet concessions could undermine the position of Afghanistan's Babrak Karmal, the Soviets moved to dampen speculation.

Libya

12. Soviet-Libyan military cooperation has increased in the past year and a half. In October the Soviets conducted their first combined training exercise with the Libyans. Soviet naval combatants and reconnaissance aircraft have paid visits to Libya since July 1981, and Soviet naval aircraft have engaged in operations flying from Libyan airfields over the Mediterranean. Libyan leader Qadhafi wants the training and demonstration of Soviet backing as deterrents to the perceived threat from the United States, including possible US operations in the Gulf of Sidra. The Soviets, seeking greater access to Libya's air and naval facilities, see such cooperation as a means of deepening Qadhafi's reliance on them. This support also emphasizes the Soviet commitment to those Arab states claiming to be threatened by the United States.

Prospects for the Future

Syria

13. During the next few months, the Soviets will continue to build up air defenses in Syria. This could include additional and more advanced SA-6 and SA-8 launchers and missiles and more MIG-23 Flogger G aircraft. It also may include the SA-11 (follow-on to the SA-6) and the SA-10 systems.[1] The deployment of the SA-10 would enhance defenses against low-altitude, high-speed aircraft and would further complicate Israeli military planning. The USSR's military presence in Syria will continue to grow and already has increased from around 2,500 men to at least 5,000.

[1] *The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes it is unlikely the SA-10 will be introduced in the near future.*

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

14. We expect the more advanced surface-to-air missile systems to be manned by Soviet personnel. Soviet command and control functions already have increased with the introduction of the SA-5 and other new systems. We believe that the Soviets will be responsible for the command and control of the SA-5s and critical elements associated with them. According to one view, the Soviets insisted on taking operational control not only of the SA-5s but of the entire Syrian air defense system and would not have begun deployment without Syrian acquiescence. This would not preclude ostensible Syrian political control of the air defense network or Syrian manning of certain elements of the air defense system, such as SAM sites defending the Golan Heights.[2] All other agencies believe that the Soviets would not have insisted on control of the entire air defense network and that the Syrians would have refused to grant it in any event. The Syrians will have de facto as well as de jure control over the central air defense network command as well as those parts of the system they man. All agencies believe that, without complete Soviet control, the system will be more vulnerable to Israeli countermeasures.

15. Soviet actions in Syria resemble those in Egypt in 1970, during the "War of Attrition," suggesting that the Soviets could decide to deploy a contingent of their own fighter aircraft to Syria to support air defense operations. Soviet pilots have been flying MIG-23 Flogger aircraft delivered to Syria last August; it is unclear whether this is in preparation for transfer to Syrian units or evidence of a Soviet-manned interceptor unit. If Soviet pilots should engage Israeli aircraft, Moscow almost certainly would attempt to limit their role to Syrian airspace. But because the distances are so short, this would be a difficult policy to maintain in a major war between Syria and Israel.

Israeli Attitudes

16. In their public statements the Israelis continue to give low-key treatment to the SA-5 issue, but they are privately concerned. Some Israeli leaders are probably pressing for a preemptive strike. They fear that the new weaponry will give Syrian President Assad renewed confidence in confronting Israel in Lebanon and will degrade Israeli military capability. The Israelis are also troubled by the political implications of the move. They believe that the missile deployment will toughen the Syrian position on withdrawal from Lebanon. Moreover, they see the deployment as the first sign of a tough new Soviet attitude designed to restore Moscow's position in the Middle East and aimed ultimately at constraining Israel's military options.

17. Most in the Israeli cabinet seem loath to approve an attack. They see little popular support for the kind of all-out conflict with Syria that might follow such a move, and are leery of a confrontation with the Soviets. Prime Minister Begin may also be reluctant to provoke another confrontation with the United States over this issue while bilateral strains remain over Lebanon and the peace process.

18. For the moment Tel Aviv is publicly dismissing the missiles' significance and suggesting that Israel has effective countermeasures. We believe that the presence of the Soviet-manned SA-5s, along with other Soviet efforts to strengthen Syrian air defenses, will have an impact on the Israelis' perception of their freedom to deploy and use their military forces in Lebanon and in Israel itself. Once the SA-5s are operational, some Israeli reconnaissance, electronic countermeasures, and battle management aircraft (key elements of past Israeli successes) will be vulnerable in a way they have not been heretofore. The Israelis will either have to live with this vulnerability, attack the SA-5s in order to return to the military status quo ante, or change their military operations. Even if the Israelis come to the conclusion that they can, or must, live with the increased vulnerabilities, it will have the effect of increasing their felt security needs and making them more obdurate in their approach to negotiations.[3] Whether or not the Israelis strike preemptively, a perception on their part of a significantly heightened threat to their air superiority or recurrent crises could lead to a strike during the next year.

[2] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army.*

[3] *The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believe that, while the Israelis will take the SA-5 and other air defense improvements into consideration, they understand the network's limitations and will not allow it to limit air operations over Lebanon and Israel, unless Israel is in a state of high tension or open hostilities with Syria. Similarly, these air defense improvements will not, by themselves, markedly harden Israeli approaches to negotiations. The Israelis' concerns over the entire military balance will be the key determinant in their approach to negotiations, and they do not view these new systems as seriously challenging their commanding military superiority.*

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

An Israeli Strike

19. The Soviets undoubtedly hope that Israel will be deterred from a preemptive attack by the Soviet military presence, the potential military and political costs, and US pressure not to attack. At the same time, they must have assumed the risk of preemption or attack deriving from Israeli-Syrian clashes in Lebanon, and made contingency plans.

20. If the Israelis were to strike the units and either fail to destroy them or sustain substantial losses, Moscow and Damascus would have achieved a major victory. The Soviets presumably would take credit for having restored the integrity of Syrian air defense and would try to transfer this success to the political arena, claiming increased status and demanding inclusion in the peace process.

21. A strike that destroyed the units with few Israeli losses would be another acute embarrassment for the Soviets, although the Soviets probably believe it could also discredit the United States in Arab eyes and undermine the Lebanese and Arab-Israeli negotiations at least temporarily. But, to preserve their credibility, the Soviets would have to replace the lost weaponry and reinforce their defenses. This might include the dispatching of Soviet-manned interceptor aircraft if they were not already present or more if they were. Although such an augmented presence would not be sufficient to prevent determined Israeli airstrikes, the Soviets would hope Israel would come to a cease-fire as it did in 1970 after losing a number of aircraft to Soviet-augmented Egyptian air defenses.

22. Moscow recognizes Israel's continuing military superiority in the region and does not want to precipitate a possible US-Soviet confrontation. Nonetheless, the Soviets and Syrians have undoubtedly considered contingency military responses to an Israeli strike on Soviet units in Syria. They might consider that simply rebuilding and adding new equipment to the sites and sending in some of their own pilots would be an inadequate response to a successful Israeli attack:

— The Soviets might consider sending ground forces, most likely one or two airborne units, into Syria (none are there now) as a symbolic gesture to deter an Israeli ground attack into Syria, but these would be of little help to the Syrians in coping with it.

— An option the Syrians might consider would be to launch Scud missiles at Israeli targets. The Scuds are manned, operated, and controlled by Syrians. This would have the advantage of being unstoppable by the Israelis after being launched and a totally Syrian action for which the Soviets could disclaim responsibility. While the Israelis would be certain to retaliate massively, it is remotely possible that the Syrians might calculate that the political consequence of an attack on Israeli territory—particularly as it affects public opinion in the Arab world—might outweigh the substantial military losses that would follow from such an attack.[4]

On balance, while the Soviets and Syrians would want to respond vigorously to an Israeli attack, they have few practical or meaningful options for taking the war into Israel proper.

Operational Guidelines and Potential Friction

23. It seems likely that a prerequisite for the deployment of Soviet air defense systems and personnel is greater Soviet involvement at the highest levels of the Syrian military establishment. Given the often-reported Soviet disdain for Syrian military leadership, it is highly unlikely that the Soviets would risk their own personnel and prestige on unilateral Syrian decisions or operations.

24. Differences between the Soviets and Syrians may arise in the near term over the use to which the air defense systems may be put. The Soviets have indicated publicly that the SA-5s are to be used only in defense of Syrian territory. For the SA-5s to be used with maximum effect the Soviets would have to engage Israeli aircraft over Lebanon or northern Israel. The Soviets therefore would have to decide at what point Israeli air activity over Lebanon became a threat to Syria.

25. Substantial risks remain no matter what assurances the Soviets receive and no matter what their role in Syrian decisionmaking. If Syria becomes involved in a major clash with Israel, the Soviets would be pressed to use the SA-5s or risk losing the credibility they have tried to establish. Should the Soviets decide to include

[4] *The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that employment of Scud missiles by the Syrians of their own volition is implausible, because the Syrians are well aware that Israeli retaliation would be instant and devastating. It is only marginally less implausible that the Syrians could be induced to fire the Scuds at Soviet urging. INR believes it is highly unlikely that Moscow would, in fact, exert such pressure, however, because the Soviets are equally cognizant of Israel's retaliatory capabilities.*

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

Lebanon in their air defense umbrella and fire on Israeli aircraft over that country or over Israel, they will be inviting an Israeli attack on the complexes in Syria with the attendant risks of loss. In any event, the Soviets will defend Syrian airspace and, if the Israelis attack Soviet-manned defenses in Syria, Soviet SAMs would be directed at Israeli combat aircraft wherever they fly. We strongly doubt the Soviets will deploy the advanced systems in Lebanon because of the certainty of an Israeli attack, and because they would be more vulnerable.

26. Moscow will try to extract concessions from the Syrians in return for the new equipment and the very generous repayment terms offered. The Soviets have long wanted greater access to onshore Syrian naval facilities and regular use of Syrian airbases for naval reconnaissance. Increased access to naval facilities would provide only marginal assistance to Soviet ships and submarines, but use of Syrian airfields would significantly improve the USSR's naval reconnaissance capability in the Mediterranean and modestly improve its antisubmarine warfare capability.

The Soviet Role in Arab-Israeli Negotiations

27. Moscow's main objective with respect to Arab-Israeli negotiations will be to obstruct the US initiative, which provides no role for the USSR and which, the Soviets believe, is designed to undermine their interests. In the short term, the Soviet military deployments to Syria have complicated the achievement of a withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon by bolstering the Assad regime's confidence in its ability to withstand an Israeli attack. They have also increased Israel's determination to extract a higher price from the United States for a withdrawal from Lebanon. Over the longer term, a strengthened Syria would be in a better political position to negotiate withdrawal from Lebanon.

28. Moscow will continue efforts to persuade Jordan's King Hussein that he risks isolation in the Arab world if he negotiates on the basis of the US peace plan and to argue against any PLO-Jordanian confederation that is not based on the concept of an independent Palestinian state.

29. The Soviets will try to persuade Assad and Yasir Arafat to settle their differences. Presumably concerned about Palestinian willingness to give the PLO chief negotiating flexibility, they will encourage radical elements in the PLO to put pressure on Arafat not to accept the US initiative as a basis for negotiations.

30. At the same time, Moscow will pursue efforts to develop closer relations with moderate Arab states, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Soviet relations with Egypt have, in fact, improved marginally in the past year. The Soviets will try to hasten the exchange of ambassadors with Cairo agreed to in principle last February. In an effort to court these nations, the Soviets will claim that the United States is unwilling to pressure Israel and that Moscow now has an ability to do so.

31. The Soviets might consider pursuing a dialogue with Israel, although they would assess the potential Arab reaction carefully. Israel has wanted to resume relations—broken by Moscow after the 1967 war. Most analysts believe the Soviets, unwilling to jeopardize their credentials with the Arabs, will continue to be reluctant to deal publicly with Israel.

Iraq

32. If the military stalemate between Iran and Iraq continues during the next year, Moscow's policy toward the war probably will remain basically as it has since April 1982—officially neutral, but in fact more supportive of Baghdad.

33. The limited Soviet-Iraqi rapprochement probably will continue in 1983, especially if the war drags on. Despite its efforts to diversify weapons supplies, Baghdad does not want to jeopardize the Soviet arms flow while the war continues; the bulk of its weapons are still of Soviet origin, and it needs to have access to spare parts and other supplies. Moscow wants to preserve its position in Baghdad and wants to preserve its share of the lucrative Iraqi arms market and reverse Baghdad's shift toward alternative sources.

34. At the same time, certain factors preclude a dramatic improvement in Soviet-Iraqi relations. President Saddam Husayn still distrusts the Soviets and harbors a deep resentment of Moscow's embargo on arms deliveries during the first eight months of the war. Despite the present poor state of Soviet-Iranian relations, Moscow still considers Iran a greater geopolitical prize than Iraq and values the anti-US policies of Iran. We believe the Soviets will avoid becoming so closely identified with Baghdad that it undermines their prospects for future gains in Tehran.

35. Although the Soviets supported UN resolutions in 1982 calling for an immediate Iran-Iraq cease-fire, they probably will not get in the forefront of media-

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

tion efforts. They have little leverage over either country and, with the prospects for the success of their mediation extremely low, probably would end up antagonizing both.

36. The Soviets have no attractive options in the event of an Iranian military breakthrough that threatens the viability of the Baghdad regime. The Soviets could ask Syria to urge restraint on Iran and issue private and implicit public warnings to Tehran to desist. Moscow also has the option of significantly increasing its weapons deliveries to Iraq as well as cutting off arms deliveries to Iran and threatening the transit of Iranian imports through the USSR. The latter moves, however, would not decisively help the Iraqis and would further anger the Iranians. The Iraqis already have a surplus of weapons, and Tehran is not likely to listen to verbal appeals or respond to threats from any quarter. The Soviets might try to back Iran, but a victorious Tehran almost certainly would reject Soviet overtures as it has in the past.

Iran

37. The Soviets do not have strong assets in Iran. The left in Iran is in disarray. The small Tudeh Party lacks significant popular backing and has been repressed by the regime. The Soviets maintain ties with leftist elements among Iran's various national minorities, but none is a serious threat to Tehran. Even Iran's primary opposition group, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, is not a serious threat to the regime. The Soviets almost certainly believe, as we do, that Tudeh and other Soviet assets in Iran will be unable over the next year to mount a successful challenge to the Khomeini regime. Even if the central government in Iran collapsed, Tudeh would be unable to seize and hold power without direct military intervention by Moscow.

38. We believe it is highly unlikely that the Soviets will intervene militarily in Iran in the next year. Despite their development since 1980 of new strategic concepts for military campaigns in the Persian Gulf region, there are no indications that the Soviets are making any preparations on the ground for such a move. Although there have been modest increases in the readiness status and equipment inventories of Soviet combat forces opposite Iran since 1979, the level of activity in these forces remains routine. More important, there would be major political and military disincentives for an invasion of Iran. In addition to Iranian resistance, the Soviets would have to assume that the West would respond with force. Moreover, an invasion would wreak havoc with Moscow's foreign policy initiatives worldwide, especially its effort to persuade West Europeans to oppose the deployment of US intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe and its attempt to improve relations with China.

39. Assuming the Islamic regime stays in power, Moscow's most likely course of action toward Iran over the next 12 months will be to continue to:

- Bolster factions in the Khomeini government that are less hostile to the USSR and discredit those that are anti-Soviet.
- Urge Syria, Libya, and South Yemen to broker improved Soviet-Iranian relations.
- Increase Soviet-Iranian economic and military trade.
- Encourage Iranian hostility toward the United States.
- Cultivate Soviet clandestine assets inside the country.

The Kremlin probably has no illusions that it can make rapid headway. Rather, it appears to be taking the long view and attempting to preserve the little influence it has for the day Khomeini departs.

Afghanistan

40. The choices confronting Andropov in Afghanistan remain as unpalatable as they were for his predecessor. Withdrawal remains highly unlikely given the Soviet commitment to preservation of a Communist regime in Kabul. Similarly, the Soviets are reluctant to introduce the several hundred thousand troops required to successfully control the insurgency—probably because of the political and military costs involved. Soviet options thus are likely to continue to be modifications of a basic strategy of attrition.

41. In the next few months, the Soviets could:

- Make more tactical adjustments to increase the effectiveness of their forces.
- Make personnel changes in the Afghan Government.
- Continue to terrorize the Afghan populace with more bombing and, possibly, the greater use of chemical warfare.
- Increase troop levels (possibly an additional 10,000 to 20,000 troops).

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

42. Access to increasing amounts of weapons from Pakistan, China, and possibly Iran is crucial to the insurgency. The Soviets may undertake new cross-border raids to stop insurgent infiltration; but they do not currently have the capability in place to undertake major moves across borders.

43. Whatever its military course within Afghanistan in the months ahead, Moscow almost certainly will continue to claim an interest in a political settlement. By so doing, it hopes to:

— Win Pakistani acceptance of the Kabul regime and reduce foreign support for the resistance.

— Project a conciliatory image to the United States, Western Europe, and the Islamic world.

— Mute criticism of Moscow at the Nonaligned summit in New Delhi in March.

— Respond to Indira Gandhi's appeal for a more conciliatory Soviet position with regard to Afghanistan.

As indicated by the hardline *Pravda* editorial in mid-December, however, it is unlikely that the Soviets will be willing to make the concessions necessary to lend much credibility to their political efforts.

44. Protracted stalemate is the most likely prospect for the Soviets in Afghanistan for the rest of the year. The USSR is unable to destroy the resistance with the level of force it now has, and the insurgents are too weak and disorganized to defeat major Soviet units. Moscow's overall strategy, therefore, will be designed to consolidate its hold in Afghanistan, to foster a Pakistani dialogue with Kabul, and to reduce the international costs of the occupation.

Libya

45. The increased Soviet-Libyan cooperation of the past year is likely to continue in coming months, as Qadhafi's fears of US intentions remain high. He probably will seek further demonstrations of Soviet military support, seeing this as a counter to US military moves. While the Soviets have taken advantage of US-Libyan tensions to advance their position in Libya, they have refused to extend any commitment to come to Libya's defense. Soviet reluctance to make such a commitment probably has increased Qadhafi's anxiety and could make him more willing to grant increased Soviet access to Libyan facilities in return for stronger Soviet backing.

46. Soviet influence over Qadhafi remains limited, in spite of the closer military relationship. Last summer's dispute over lagging Libyan payments for Soviet arms increased Qadhafi's basic distrust of Moscow; at that time, the Soviets insisted on continued cash payments even though this placed new strains on the relationship.

47. The Soviets benefit from Libya's destabilizing activities in Africa and, through their supply of military equipment to Qadhafi, contribute to these efforts. They have remained publicly detached from these activities, however, for several reasons. The Libyans almost certainly are not interested in coordinating their policy with the USSR. And the Soviets prefer to remain uncommitted to and untarnished by Qadhafi's unpredictable actions. Moscow was disappointed by the collapse of the pro-Libyan government in Chad in early 1982, but there is no evidence that overthrowing the Habre regime is an important Soviet objective.

South Yemen

48. Moscow will continue to exploit its firmly established position in South Yemen to expand its presence and influence in the region. In an effort to attract assistance from the West and South Yemen's Persian Gulf neighbors, President Hasani is moderating his foreign policy, curtailing support to the insurgents in North Yemen, and seeking reconciliation with his neighbors. We doubt, however, that he wants to move significantly away from the Soviet Union.

49. The Soviets probably have encouraged Hasani to court the Gulf states, both to persuade them to normalize relations with the USSR and to ease South Yemen's economic problems. At the same time, the Soviets most likely are encouraging the South Yemenis to maintain the option to use liberation movements to destabilize moderate Gulf states if attempts to normalize relations should prove unsuccessful. Moscow undoubtedly is worried, however, that South Yemen could move too close to the conservative Arabs. The Soviets recently have also expressed their opposition to Western oil exploration in South Yemen.

50. Should the Soviets conclude that Hasani's policies threaten their position in Aden, they would try to organize opposition to him; they may, in fact, have tacitly approved last summer's abortive coup plotting.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

They will certainly continue to use the leverage available to them—based on Aden's dependence on Soviet arms, advisers, and spare parts as well as on their strong influence in South Yemen's ruling party, defense, and internal security spheres—to keep South Yemen on a course they deem acceptable.

An Aggressive Soviet Policy

51. Although we see no supportive evidence and consider it unlikely, the Andropov regime could decide to alter course and adopt a more aggressive military policy in the region. If so, we would expect to see clear indicators.

52. A Soviet decision to put pressure on Iran—possibly in the context of the war with Iraq as well as the Afghan situation—could be seen in a significant strengthening of Soviet military forces in the Transcaucasus or in western Afghanistan. Moscow might combine such a buildup with the issuance of verbal warnings to Tehran. These indicators would also pertain if the Soviets were considering a military intervention in Iran to overthrow the Islamic regime. It might also consider sending increased numbers of Soviet advisers and technicians to Iraq to support the Iraqi war efforts.

53. A decision to try to crush the insurgents in Afghanistan would be reflected in the preparations for introduction of at least several hundred thousand additional Soviet troops. Soviet forces might also undertake major cross-border attacks in Pakistan, and possibly Iran, to cut off insurgent access. An attempt to crush the insurgency might also require the greatly intensified use of anticivilian tactics, including the expanded use of chemical warfare.

54. A generally more aggressive Soviet posture in the Middle East might also be reflected in intensified demands for more frequent use of naval air facilities in the Mediterranean (Libya and Syria) and the introduction of more advanced aircraft into the Indian Ocean area (South Yemen and Ethiopia). The Soviets could combine an increased presence with encouragement to its clients to become more aggressive. Should they want to strengthen both their tactical and strategic positions, they might even deploy Badgers, as they did in Egypt in the early 1970s, or other advanced combat aircraft to these areas. Such deployments would increase the threat to Israel's security and negatively affect the US position in the area. The Soviets might urge Libya to move more strongly in Chad, to seek more actively to undermine President Nimeiri in Sudan, and to try to destabilize the Mubarak regime in Egypt. They could encourage South Yemen to renew its strong support of the National Democratic Front in North Yemen and to resume the operations of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.

55. Moscow could abandon its attempt to court the moderate Arabs and join forces with radical Arabs to try to undermine negotiations. We might see the issuance of strong warnings to the United States with respect to its support for Israel and Israel's continued presence in Lebanon. And we might see Soviet encouragement of an aggressive Syrian policy in Lebanon and on the Golan, designed to increase tensions and polarize the situation still further.

56. On the other hand, there are options open to the Soviets of a political and diplomatic nature that are equally unlikely. They could elect to solve their problems in Afghanistan by withdrawing. They could decide to abandon Iraq and side with Iran, offering assistance to Iran in the hope of ultimately achieving a major breakthrough in relations there.

57. Most of the foregoing actions are unrealistic given Arab attitudes. Many would prove counterproductive or would undermine Soviet policies in Western Europe or elsewhere. Nonetheless, adoption of any or some of these options would indicate a new determination by Moscow to try to alter the situation in the region dramatically to its own advantage.

Estimated Soviet Military and Economic Presence in the Middle East and South Asia

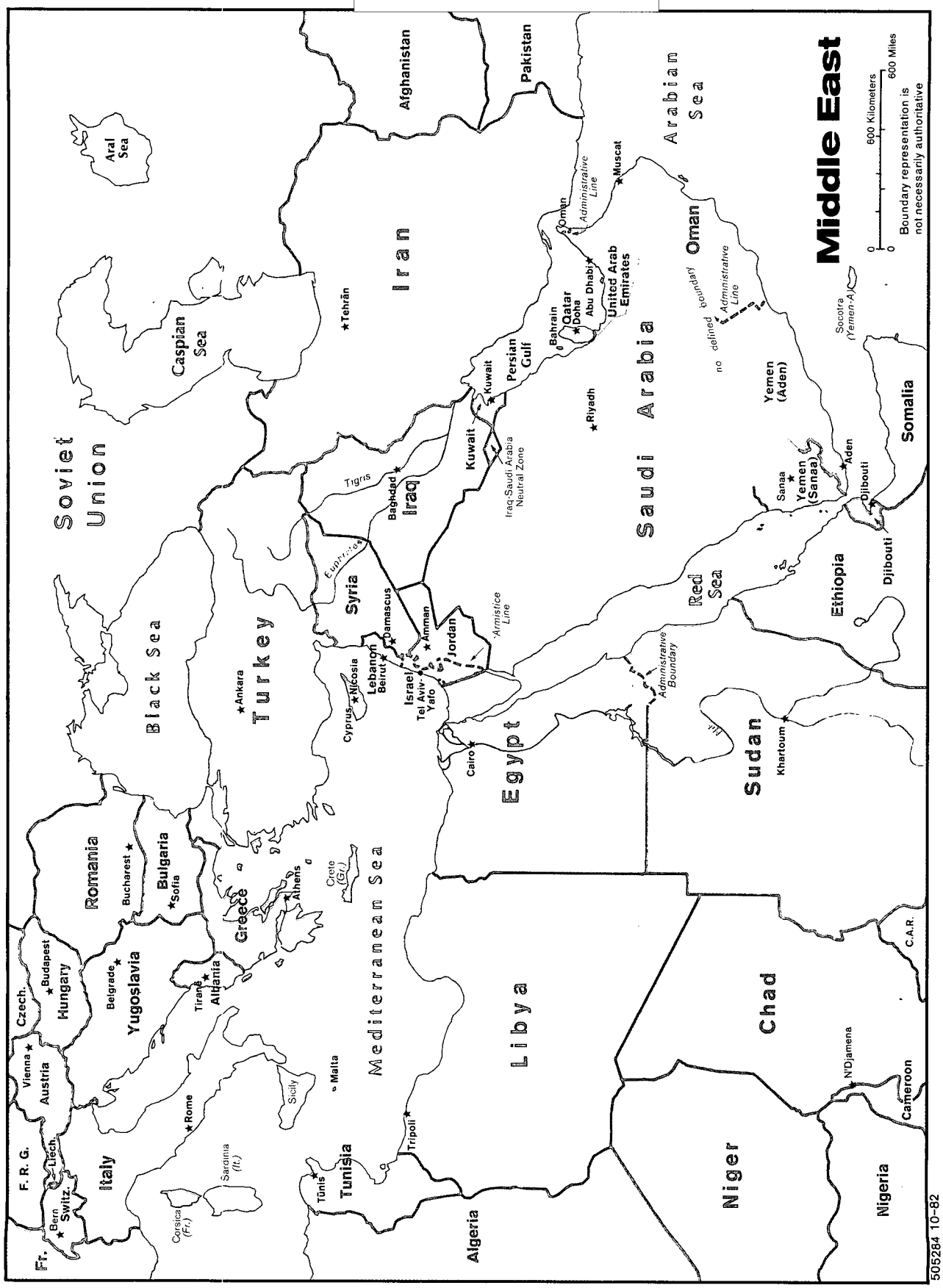
Country	Military Personnel	Economic Personnel
Morocco	-	200
Algeria	1,500	5,000
Tunisia	-	285
Libya	1,500-2,000	1,500
Egypt	-	35
Syria	5,000	1,500
Jordan	25	25
Iraq	700-1,000	5,000
Iran	50-200	2,100
North Yemen	750	200
South Yemen	1,000	2,000
Afghanistan	105,000	3,500
Pakistan	-	900
India	200	1,500

Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the Persian Gulf shaykdoms (excluding Kuwait) do not have diplomatic relations with the USSR. There are no Soviet military or economic personnel in Lebanon.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1



Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

DISSEMINATION NOTICE

1. This document was disseminated by the Directorate of Intelligence. This copy is for the information and use of the recipient and of persons under his or her jurisdiction on a need-to-know basis. Additional essential dissemination may be authorized by the following officials within their respective departments:

a. Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, for the Department of State
b. Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
c. Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, for the Department of the Army
d. Director of Naval Intelligence, for the Department of the Navy
e. Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, for the Department of the Air Force
f. Director of Intelligence, for Headquarters, Marine Corps
g. Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Intelligence Analysis, for the Department of Energy
h. Assistant Director, FBI, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation
i. Director of NSA, for the National Security Agency
j. Special Assistant to the Secretary for National Security, for the Department of the Treasury
k. The Deputy Director for Intelligence for any other Department or Agency

2. This document may be retained, or destroyed in accordance with applicable security regulations, or returned to the Directorate of Intelligence.

25X1

4. The title of this document when used separately from the text is unclassified.

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

25X1

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9

Page Denied

Approved For Release 2008/04/15 : CIA-RDP86T00302R000701070001-9